



## Illinois Department of Natural Resources

One Natural Resources Way Springfield, Illinois 62702-1271  
<http://dnr.state.il.us>

Pat Quinn, Governor  
Marc Miller, Director

May 27, 2014

James Kelley  
U.S. Army Corps of Engineers  
Rock Island District  
ATTN: OD-PE, Clock Tower Building – PO Box 2004  
Rock Island, Illinois 61204-2004

**Re: Hager Slough Special Drainage District, Sand Seepage Berm**  
**Project Number(s): 1410940 (USACE 2014-639)**  
**County: Cass**

Dear Mr. Kelly:

The Illinois Department of Natural Resources (Department) has reviewed the above mentioned project located at Section 29, Township 19 N., and Range 11 W. near Beardstown, IL adjacent to the Sangamon River. The project involves the construction of a sand seepage berm approximately 2,600 feet long on the landside toe of the Hager Slough Special Drainage District Levee to repair damages incurred during the 2013 flood. Sand will be obtained from the Beardstown DMMP stockpile. A staging area will be located adjacent to the access route in a non-wetland area. Wetland mitigation will be conducted at an offsite location within the same watershed and consist of tree planting. It is the Department's understanding that tree clearing and soil disturbance activities already occurred on the levee without a permit in 2012 and USACE is addressing this issue.

Upon review, it was discovered that trees were likely removed on a portion of the Department's Sanganois State Fish and Wildlife Area without authorization (see enclosed maps). The Department is investigating this issue and is planning a site visit in early June, 2014. We request notification if further work is planned for the levee on Department property in which authorization may be required. It is also our understanding that the state and federally-threatened plant, decurrent false aster (*Boltonia decurrens*), was discovered in the project area by USACE during a site visit in 2013. If decurrent false aster is present on the property belonging to the Department, landowner permission would also be needed to "take" a listed plant in accordance with the *Illinois Endangered Species Protection Act* [520 ILCS 10/11].

The Natural Heritage Database contains records of the state-endangered smooth softshell turtle (*Apalone mutica*) in the vicinity of the project. The Department is working with technical staff and will determine if appropriate sandbar habitat is present in the project area during the June site visit. Mitigation for the smooth softshell turtle may be recommended once the Department finishes its review.

OREP 1410940 (USACE 2014-639)

Thank you for the opportunity to comment, please contact me at 217-524-0501 if I can be of further assistance.

Sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Nathan Grider".

Nathan Grider  
Biologist  
Impact Assessment, OREP

cc: Jon Duyvejonck, USFWS

Encl: IDNR property maps

This recommendation regarding the issuance/denial of the US Army Corps of Engineers permit by the IDNR, Office of Realty and Environmental Planning does not preclude permit decisions made by the IDNR, Office of Water Resources under the Illinois Rivers, Lakes, and Streams Act.

## IDNR Property Maps



**Figure 1.** The above map shows approximate IDNR property boundaries in green hatch and the area of concern from unauthorized tree clearing in the red circle. A site visit is planned for early June, 2014 to investigate the issue.



**Figure 2.** The above image from Google Earth in July, 2012 shows the extent of the tree clearing that had occurred to that date. The IDNR property concern is within the red circle.